

**To:** Madigan, Andrea[Madigan.Andrea@epa.gov]; Stavnes, Sandra[Stavnes.Sandra@epa.gov]; Land, Kelcey[Land.Kelcey@epa.gov]  
**From:** Russo, Rebecca  
**Sent:** Thur 8/13/2015 5:14:20 PM  
**Subject:** FW: Spill-related Questions from Senate Approps - Minority

Can someone check if this is the most up-to-date.

Rebecca A. Russo

Region 8 Congressional and Intergovernmental Liaison

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**From:** Blizzard, James  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 13, 2015 10:58 AM  
**To:** Distefano, Nichole; Levine, Carolyn; Russo, Rebecca; Cohen, Nancy  
**Subject:** RE: Spill-related Questions from Senate Approps - Minority

From EPA Region 8 website – seems to get to the heart of Rachel's questions, but I'll wait for Carolyn for answers

## Background

EPA and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) conducted a Superfund Site Assessment of the site in the 1990s. This assessment identified the severe impacts to aquatic life in the UA and its tributaries from naturally occurring and mining-related heavy metals. It also acknowledged the community-based collaborative effort that was under way at that time to address those impacts. In recognition of the community-based collaborative effort, EPA agreed to postpone adding all or a portion of the site to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), as long as progress was being made to improve the water quality of the Animas River.

In support of the collaborative effort, EPA's Superfund Remedial program has contributed resources for water quality sampling, ecological risk assessment and data analysis. In addition, the Superfund Removal program has contributed resources for the

investigation and closure (bulkheading) of the Red and Bonita Mine tunnel.

EPA, through its Ecosystem Protection program, also provides the Colorado Water Quality Division of CDPHE with Nonpoint Source Management program (Section 319) grant funds. ARSG and others have received grants under that program for investigation and cleanup efforts in the watershed.

Until approximately 2005, water quality in the Animas River was improving. However, since 2005, water quality in the Animas River has not improved and, for at least 20 miles below the confluence with Cement Creek, has declined significantly.

Because of this declining water quality in the Animas River, in 2008, EPA's Superfund Site Assessment program began investigations in Upper Cement Creek focused on evaluating whether the Upper Cement Creek area alone would qualify for inclusion on the NPL. This evaluation indicated that the area would qualify, although after receiving additional community input, EPA again postponed efforts to include the area on the NPL. Since that time, EPA has continued and broadened its investigations of conditions at the site in order to understand the major sources of heavy metal contamination in the UA.

**From:** Blizzard, James

**Sent:** Thursday, August 13, 2015 12:43 PM

**To:** Distefano, Nichole; Levine, Carolyn; Russo, Rebecca; Cohen, Nancy

**Subject:** Spill-related Questions from Senate Approps - Minority

- 1) Was the site of the spill once proposed as a SF site, but not made one because of local or state opposition?
- 2) What authority/source of funds was EPA operating under/spending at this site?
- 3) What other authorities/sources of funds does EPA using for abandoned mine cleanup?